

Office of Professional Accountability (OPA) Commendations & Complaints Report August 2003

Commendations:

Commendations Received in August: 90

Commendations Received to Date: 597

Rank	Summary
(2) Sergeants (2) Detectives (4) Officers	Sergeants, detectives, officers deserve congratulations for their good work leading to the apprehension of a fugitive homicide suspect wanted in Oregon.
(2) Officers	Two civilians went on a ride-a-long and complimented the officers on their professional business manner and experience. The citizens have a new respect for all police officers and their service to the community.
(1) Officer	An officer responding to parents of a mentally-disabled son who had been missing for a number of days exhibited a compassionate and caring demeanor. The department should be proud of the officer's service to the community.
(1) Officer	Appreciation was noted for an officer's outstanding knowledge and participation as a guest speaker in an evening graduate class in Computer Security. The instructor appreciated the officer's gracious contribution of time and talent.
(1) Officer	A couple attending a Mariner's game had to leave early because of illness. An officer noticed their difficulties and offered to assist them to their vehicle. The couple wanted to say thank you to the officer for taking the time to notice and for being so helpful.
Honor Guard	Seattle Police Department Honor Guards are to be commended for their professional presence and dedication at a service for a former Sergeant's funeral. The Honor Guards sharp but quiet dignity showed that the former Sergeant was not forgotten. The family greatly appreciated and was touched by their presence.
(1) Officer	An SPD officer's presentation about the department made a very positive impression on the young people attending a camp.
(1) Officer	Seattle Police Department's tireless and coordinated efforts for a memorial service were instrumental in honoring the memory and in helping to begin a long healing process for the family and friends.
(1) Detective	The family of a sexual assault victim appreciated the appearance of the investigating detective at the court sentencing. A big thank you to the detective for being very thorough in the investigation of the case.
(1) Detective	A commendation for the exemplary work in a pattern robbery investigation that resulted in the arrest of the suspect. The diligent effort and extraordinary investigative work solved 10 additional robbery incidents making the community much safer. The detective demonstrated considerable skills and professionalism investigating this complex case.
(2) Officers	Several officers provided invaluable training to a community business on safety training. The officers combined their sense of humor and safety instructions, which made for a productive and fun afternoon.
(2) Officers	A recent high school graduate shadowed several officers and went on several ride-a-longs to observe officer's interaction with youth in the community. The ride-a-longs were educational on police culture and procedures giving a greater understanding of the difficulties police officers face on a day-to-day basis and the importance of their role in society.

(1) Officer	A thank you for a pro-active police officer that observed and investigated a car parked at a business that was closed for the day.
(1) Officer	An elderly couple appreciated the assistance provided to them after an accident occurred involving several vehicles. The officer drove the couple home and back to the scene and assisted with taping a fender to the vehicle allowing the vehicle to be driven home.
(2) Officers	Two officers did an excellent job of focusing on the issue in a timely and direct response.
(1) Officer	An officer assisted at an accident and provided follow-up at the hospital. Involved individual appreciated the help.
Harbor Patrol	A citizen observed Harbor Patrol assisting a boat and skipper to a safe location after getting the tangled boat off the rocks near Magnolia. The citizen wrote a commendation for what a great job Harbor Patrol had accomplished.
(2) Officers	Two officers were commended for their efforts and attention to detail in two incidents. The first incident was an attempted suicide and the second incident resulted in the arrest of a bank robber who was responsible for at least six other hold-ups.
(1) Officer	The officer that responded to the theft of a travel trailer was extremely kind, considerate and efficient, while taking the complete details of the theft. The officer's demeanor did a great deal to give them peace of mind.
(2) Officers	Two bicycle patrol officers were making themselves visible and thus reducing the gangs, prostitutes, drugs that have plagued a neighborhood. The neighbors believe the officers have made a difference.
(1) Officer	An officer's assistance was extremely helpful and included suggestions and other invaluable information when a vehicle was stolen. The officer was professional and had a caring manner and is a credit to the Seattle Police Department.
(4) Officers	Four officers responded to a bank robbery within minutes after the information was broadcast. Officers located, stopped and subsequently arrested the suspect. Thank you for the quick response and safe apprehension.
Honor Guard	Seattle Police Department's Honor Guard did an outstanding job in presenting the colors in a highly professional manner. The Administrative Support Assistant was "super" in coordinating the details and scheduling.
(1) Sergeant (6) Officers	Following the report of an armed robbery, a sergeant and officers quickly established containment in and around the area. A person matching the description that was broadcast was located just three blocks from the scene. The efforts of the officers are greatly appreciated.
(2) Officers	Two officers responded to a 911 call regarding the break-in of a vehicle. The victim was nervous, however the officers responded in a calm and caring manner and were able to provide assurance while taking the incident report.
(2) Officers	Two citizens went on a ride-a-long in conjunction with participation in the Seattle Police Department Citizen Police Academy. The citizens were surprised at the variety of tasks that are performed during a regular patrol. The officers showed dedication and professionalism to their job and the citizens appreciated the observation ride.
(1) Parking Enforcement Officer Supervisor	A Parking Enforcement supervisor made an outstanding presentation as a representative of the Parking Enforcement Unit. The group was highly impressed with her outstanding professionalism, dedication and Field Training Program presentation.
(2) Officers	Two officers that wrote a very thorough report and gave extraordinary testimony during a domestic violence evidentiary hearing were commended.
(2) Officers	Citizens were thankful for assistance with a neighborhood disturbance that seemed to be getting out of hand. Partygoers were carrying on and were on the verge of becoming violent. The officers were pleasant, calm, courteous and

	patient as they handled the situation. The officers remained on the block until everyone was calm.
(2) Officers	A business appreciated two officers' for their professional and effective job in the investigation of an employee theft situation. The officer's were courteous and helpful to the firm and respectful to the employee under investigation. The investigation techniques were superb; the officer's were excellent in performance of duties and should receive recognition.
(1) Officer	An officer assisted a lost female with making bus connections to her home. The female appreciated the officer's assistance and has a new respect for the Police Department.
(1) Officer	All of the neighbors as well as the boat owner really appreciated a positive attitude and wonderful people skills of an officer that handled an illegally parked boat in their neighborhood.
(4) Officers	Officers responded to an in-progress residential burglary and the suspect was caught fleeing the residence with the victims' property on their person.
(4) Officers	Officer's stopped a stolen car and the suspect implied she had a gun and police would have to shoot her because she was not going back to prison. The suspect was taken into custody without injuries due to the calm professionalism and efforts of the officers'.
(1) Officer	Seattle Police Department received a letter of appreciation from a victim that was mugged and robbed and had received injuries. The officer at the scene, with his keen eyesight and attentiveness, spotted the stolen wallet and belongings and returned them to the victim within an hour of the assault.
(1) Dispatcher	A responsible dispatcher coordinated with other precincts, agencies and specialty units when a suspect stole a patrol vehicle. Due to the quick response of the dispatcher, the stolen police car was recovered in 23 minutes.
(2) Officers	The Coast Guard requested assistance from officers regarding two very intoxicated boaters with weapons involved. The officers were extremely helpful and professional while handling the boaters.
(1) Officer	An officer assisted a female in a vehicle accident and was caring, efficient, sensitive, professional and insisted in waiting until a family member arrived. This went over and above his call of duty and it is reassuring to know that Seattle police officers' care.
(3) Officers	Three officers were approached by a female who had observed a male in an apartment complex victimize a female. All officers worked together and saved the victim from further serious injuries.
(1) Lieutenant (1) Sergeant (1) Officer	A dignitary from overseas appreciated the hospitality and courtesies extended to her and her entourage during her visit to Seattle. The dignitary enjoyed her stay and was very impressed by the city's law and order maintained by the Department.
(1) Officer	An officer responded to a 911 call regarding a car parked in front of a house. The officer arrived and investigated. The car turned out to be stolen with the thief and drugs inside. The officer gave my family a very safe feeling for responding so quickly.
(1) Officer	An officer did an excellent job speaking about the responsibilities of police officers. The officer provided a clear message that her job is to help people.
(1) Officer	An officer assisted a lost/stuck elderly female by consoling and transporting her and her wheelchair back to her managed living facilities.
(1) Officer	A citizen appreciated the prompt, efficient and professional behavior in locating an individual who sideswiped their car on private property.
(1) Officer	A person reported a suspicious entry to a residence and an officer checked the residence, relieving any concerns. The officer was professional, courteous and respectful when responding to the call.

(1) Officer	A student participated in a ride-a-long with an officer and wanted to say thanks for taking the time to share his experiences.
(1) Officer	An officer is to be commended for his quick action and his dedication to duty in response to a fraud incident at a local bank. The officer apprehended the suspect who has now been tied to over 20 identification thefts and forgeries in King County.
(1) Officer	A victim commended an officer that stepped forward to stop a man who had hit her vehicle causing damage. A conciliatory agreement to repair her vehicle has been established. The citizen would like to salute all police for the faithful service that is rendered to the community.
(1) Officer	An officer has been working very hard to keep a neighborhood street safe and it has made a difference to the community. Thank you!
(1) Officer (1) Dispatcher	A Seattle Police Officer made a rapid arrest of a bank robber and a full recovery of the stolen money. We appreciate the officer and dispatcher who were able to effectively utilize their training.
(4) Officers	Four officers provided excellent police work in making narcotic arrests and recovering stolen vehicles.

August 2003 Closed Cases:

Cases involving alleged misconduct of officers and employees in the course of their official public duties are summarized below. Identifying information has been removed.

Cases are reported by allegation type. One case may be reported under more than one category.

UNNECESSARY FORCE

Synopsis	Action Taken
Complainant alleged he was handcuffed and transported to another location without legal justification, and upon release was shoved against the patrol car causing injury	The evidence did not establish by a preponderance the complainant's allegations. Findings: Misuse of Authority – NOT SUSTAINED; Unnecessary Force – NOT SUSTAINED; Failure to Report Use of Force – NOT SUSTAINED.
Complainant alleged named officers used unnecessary force during her arrest following a traffic stop.	Investigation revealed no evidence of misconduct, and significant credibility problems with the complainant. Finding – ADMINISTRATIVELY UNFOUNDED.
Complainant alleged that during her narcotics arrest she was handled roughly and may have bruised her leg.	The evidence supports that force was not used during the subject's arrest. Her statement does not clearly indicate any misconduct. A civilian witness to the incident supported the officers' account and stated he was impressed with their actions. Finding – ADMINISTRATIVELY EXONERATED.
Complainant alleged named officers, without reason, took him to the ground, used unnecessary force, and arrested him.	The evidence supported that the complainant was intoxicated, assaulted one of the officers, and that the named officers used necessary and appropriate force to overcome the complainant's resistance. The forced used was documented, screened, and reported. Finding – EXONERATED.
Complainant alleged unknown officer used unnecessary force in taking him to the ground to detain him.	The evidence indicates that the subject was involved in an altercation with another citizen at a bus stop. The subject was under the influence of narcotics. His statement is vague and inconsistent. There is no indication that any officers used force or handcuffed the subject at any time. Finding – UNFOUNDED.
Complainant alleged she was pushed for no reason by officers responding to a disturbance in a parking lot.	Evidence indicated the complainant was intoxicated and hostile. Statements of independent and officer witnesses support that the complainant was escorted by officers when she assaulted another person. During the escort, she tripped and fell. The complainant and her brother have poor credibility. Finding – UNFOUNDED.
Complainant alleged unnecessary force used in his arrest for drug dealing.	Evidence showed that the subject resisted arrest. The force reported by the subject was similar to that documented, screened, and reported by the officers. The subject lacks credibility. Finding – EXONERATED.
Complainant alleged unnecessary force was used by the named officers during his arrest for violation of a protective order.	The evidence supports that the officers used appropriate and necessary force to overcome the subject's resistance. The use of force was documented, screened, and reported. The statement of a witness present at the arrest supports the officers' report and is contrary to the subject's initial complaint. The subject did not cooperate with the investigation. Finding – EXONERATED.

Complainant driving by an arrest alleged the officers used unnecessary force on the subject.	The subject ran from the officers after being stopped for a traffic violation. The named officers did use some force to gain control of the subject, but there were conflicting accounts by the complainant, subject, named officers, and civilian witness. The evidence cannot prove or disprove the allegations. Finding – NOT SUSTAINED.
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VIOLATION OF RULES/REGULATIONS/LAWS

Synopsis	Action Taken
The chain of command forwarded information that an employee, while off-duty but driving a city vehicle, was arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol after being involved in a minor collision.	The evidence supported the allegation of negligent driving. Finding – SUSTAINED.

MISUSE OF AUTHORITY

Synopsis	Action Taken
Complainant alleged the named officer conducted a traffic stop, made comments about her attractiveness, caressed her hand, and attempted to coerce her into sitting in his patrol car.	A patrol car video/audio tape captured the entire stop and interaction between the subject and the named officer. The tape completely contradicts the complainant's allegations. The clear conclusion is that the subject made a false complaint. Finding – ADMINISTRATIVELY UNFOUNDED.

CONDUCT UNBECOMING AN OFFICER

Synopsis	Action Taken
Complainant alleged named officer used derogatory language and was rude when speaking to a group of young men.	Complainant failed to respond to numerous requests for contact. No evidence corroborated complainant's allegation. Finding – ADMINISTRATIVELY UNFOUNDED.
Complainant alleged the named officer threw his sunglasses to the ground during his arrest for drug violations. (LI 02-0189)	The complainant made this complaint two months after his arrest. Reports written the date of the incident stated that the subject threw his own sunglasses to the ground. Finding – UNFOUNDED.

VIOLATION OF LAW

Synopsis	Action Taken
Complainant alleged he observed contact between the named officer and a prostitute.	The evidence demonstrated that the complainant made a false complaint. Phone records were obtained to contact him via the cellular phone he had used to call 911. The complainant stated he had been intoxicated, and that the complaint was a misunderstanding. He confirmed the alleged contact never happened. Finding – ADMINISTRATIVELY UNFOUNDED.

Definitions of Findings:

“Sustained” means the allegation of misconduct is supported by a preponderance of the evidence.

“Not sustained” means the allegation of misconduct was neither proved nor disproved by a preponderance of the evidence.

“Unfounded” means a preponderance of evidence indicates the alleged act did not occur as reported or classified, or is false.

“Exonerated” means a preponderance of evidence indicates the conduct alleged did occur, but that the conduct was justified, lawful and proper.

Referred for Supervisory Resolution.

Training or Policy Recommendation means that there has been no willful violation but that there may be deficient policies or inadequate training that need to be addressed.

“Administratively Unfounded/Exonerated” is a discretionary finding which may be made prior to the completion that the complaint was determined to be significantly flawed procedurally or legally; or without merit, i.e., complaint is false or subject recants allegations, preliminary investigation reveals mistaken/wrongful employee identification, etc, or the employee’s actions were found to be justified, lawful and proper and according to training.

“Administratively Inactivated” means that the investigation cannot proceed forward, usually due to insufficient information or the pendency of other investigations. The investigation may be reactivated upon the discovery of new, substantive information or evidence. Inactivated cases will be included in statistics but may not be summarized in this report if publication may jeopardize a subsequent investigation.

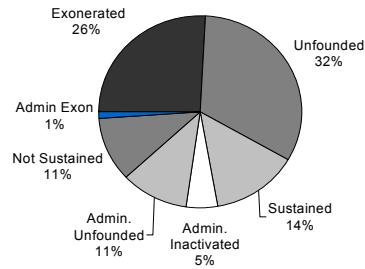
Status of OPA Contacts to Date:

2002 Contacts

	December 2002	Jan. - Dec. 2002
Contact Logs	50	573
Cases Assigned for Supervisory Review	11	104
Cases Assigned for Investigation (IS; LI)	17	201
Cases Closed	3	183*
Commendations	27	1,416

*includes 2002 cases closed in 2003

CHART A
Dispositions of Allegations in Completed Investigations
2002 Cases
N=360 Allegations in 183 cases



2003 Contacts

	August 2003	Jan-Dec 2003
Preliminary Investigation Reports	25	362
Cases Assigned for Supervisory Review	16	61
Cases Assigned for Investigation (IS;LI)	25	129
Commendations	90	597